ius the Epicurean at the point where I had dropped it last year. Aloud we have just finished George Eliot's very ordinary *Amos Barton.* Now we are reading *The Merry Men* with delight[2]

26 June

It seems to me at times that I have never yet written anything serious; that I have always presented my thought in an ironic manner, and that, were I to disappear today, I should leave an image of myself from which even my guardian angel could not recognize me.

(The belief in angels is so disagreeable to me that I hasten to add that this is only a manner of speaking— but one that expresses my thought rather well.)

Perhaps, after all, my belief in the work of art and the cult that I make of it prevent that perfect sincerity which I henceforth demand of myself. What interest have I in any limpidity that is not a quality of style?

29 June

Every day I read a chapter of *Marius the Epicurean* (with the greatest delight); aloud, for an hour, *The Merry Men;* I spend from three to five hours (and more often five than three) in piano-practice (exclusively Bach and Chopin). When one adds Ransomed book on Wilde, some Milton, some Keats, some Byron, etc., plus the correspondence, which every day takes one or two hours more, there is hardly any time left for personal work. I am putting it off until I travel againj when I shall have neither the piano nor any reading to finish.

Ransome's book strikes me as good —and even very good in spots, Perhaps he admires a bit too much the trappings with which Wilde liked to cover his thought and which still seem to me rather artificial— and on the other hand he fails to show to what a degree the plays An *Ideal Husband* and A *Woman of No Importance* are revelatory — and I was about to say confidential— despite their apparent objectivity,

Certainly in my little book on Wilde I was not

altogether Just to his work and turned up my nose at it too readily— I mean before having known it sufficiently. As I think it over I wonder at the good grace with which Wilde listened to me when, in Algiers, I criticized his plays (very impertinently it seems to me today). No impatience IB the tone of his reply, and not even a protest; it was then that he was led to say to me, almost as an excuse, that extraordinary sentence which I quoted and which has since been quoted everywhere: "I put all my genius into my life; I put oijly my talent into my works/* I should be interested to fcoow if he ever said that sentence to anyone eke but tfie*

[2] *The Way of* AH *Flesh* is by Saimuel Better; M0r&s *the Epfamm,* **by** Walter Pate*; and *The Merry* Men, by H. L, Stevenson.